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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests some steps to be taken by trustees in (1) getting rid of a college president, (2) hiring a new one, and (3) retaining him. These are: (1) a periodic review of presidential effectiveness, which can lead to a peaceful change of office after the incumbent has served his usefulness; (2) determination of qualifications possessed by a successful candidate and the procedures to be followed in the selection process. (Though this is generally the trustees' responsibility, faculty and students should be consulted); (3) the need for the board of trustees to present a united front to the outside world after the president has been selected; (4) alloting the president a place on the board of trustees along with actual authority as a member; (5) a definition of the president's relations to the board at the outset of his tenure; (6) sticking to the terms of the contract; (7) recognizing the president's essential qualities as a human being; (8) providing him with an adequate salary and comparable perquisites; (9) strongly recommending the president take time off; (10) giving the president all possible support; and (11) assuring that the board itself clearly understands its own specific role in the management of the institution. (AF)

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THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

by

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According to the latest available figures an estimated 45,000 trustees are presently serving as eagle-eyed overseers of the nation's colleges and universities. Backstopping them are at least 650,198 members of the professoriat and 7,571,636 eager, and earnest, and sometimes truculent students. At the center of this fantastic imbroglio is the bewildered, frightened, Chapmanesque figure whom we refer to as the college president. Since there are only 2,252 listed institutions of higher learning, and between 200 and 250 presidential vacancies at any one time, even if he and his harried counterparts were to organize their own exclusive union, the degree of strength which they could muster is minuscule in the face of the enormity confronting them in the course of their diurnal rounds.

One might even ask whether the president matters "all that much." In contrast to the self-serving adage in our brotherhood

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that a great university is the long shadow of a great man, we have the record a few years back of a student-faculty group, some 200 strong, on a distinguished Eastern campus which concluded that the president's role should remain primarily janitorial. Lest this present assembly should too readily adopt the same point of view, let me quote from Andrew Hacker, a political scientist who, writing recently in the New York Times about the chief academic executive, raised many a flagging spirit by declaring: "the men in these positions today are. . . public figures. If our universities are changing, so are the men being chosen to head them. One sure way to chart the future of higher education in American society is by observing the trials and temptations of its university presidents."

Having been a college president and served time in an institution only a short plane jaunt from where I am standing, let me say in candor that the trials far outweigh the temptations. A few of my colleagues grow gracefully old on the job. Others become prematurely grey, develop ulcers, and seek early pasturage. For generations it was thought that the average longevity in office was 4.23 years. A decade ago Bill Selden, then of the National Commission on Accrediting, after a broad survey concluded that the average was more nearly 8.7 years. If he were repeating his survey today I predict that we would be right back to the 4.3. I have it on good

authority that "a president who has been in the job only two years, now has greater seniority than half the presidents" of the whole membership of the Association of American Universities. Even though Nicholas Murray Butler, in the days before Mark Rudd, served Columbia University from 1901 through 1945, setting something of a marathon record, I would agree with Barnaby Keeney who when he retired from Brown University declared that no president should remain in office more than ten years. The emotional and physical hazards of the job are simply too exhausting.

What this means, of course, is that a high percentage of college and university trustees can expect at least once in their term of office to have the heady experience of participating in a presidential search. What this means further is that by all odds their most important act as college trustees, with one possible exception, is participating in this presidential safari. The possible exception--and, mind you, I say only "possible"--may not be president-hiring but president-firing. Both operations are potentially traumatic, with the latter enjoying slight odds. Dr. Bolman, whose short study How College Presidents Are Chosen (1968) is an excellent survey of the problems involved in this search and rescue operation, quotes a chairman of a board as saying he'd resign if he had to go through it a second time: "I very honestly would never

want to live through such an experience again. It was tedious; it was full of conflicts. The press annoyed me incessantly, even to the point of hounding me at home. Exceptional pressures were brought upon members of the board. It was a dirty game, a haphazard game, a game without a rulebook."

Incidentally, a few days ago a report came across my desk entitled Inventory of Academic Leadership, by Samuel M. Nabrit and Julius S. Scott, Jr. It represented an opinion survey of trustees in a discrete category of institution with, to me, rather surprising conclusions. "The trustees are not generally aware," the authors stated,"that their single most important function is that of selecting a president." On the contrary, they place it well down on the totem pole, with budget, policy, and institutional development taking precedent in that order. Particularly for what this implies about the division of presidential-trustee responsibilities this is an alarming reversal of priorities.

My charge this evening, as you know from the program, has two phases, either of which would be adequate for a full-length address. The process of recruitment of the president bears such an important relationship to his retention, however, that I cannot quibble over their being conjoined for this occasion--except that the doubling up does mean that I should get on with my assignment or we may be here all evening.

Preliminary to the recruitment of the new president, unless we are dealing with a fledgling institution, is of course the interesting board responsibility of disposing of the incumbent. The most favorable circumstances are when he arrives at retirement age, requests early release, or resigns to accept a better job. Whenever one of these circumstances exists, you are well advised to be thankful for small favors and content to give him a grand and grateful sendoff. (At the very least he should receive a silver fruit bowl with his name and dates of office duly inscribed. He will doubtless never find any use for it--but, after all, he already has a watch.)

By a curious kind of benign happenstance, changes in academic leadership seem on average to coincide with the need for new institutional directions. Thus they should generally be welcomed. They do, however, impose upon the trustees the peculiar responsibility of seeking to determine what the new directions should be, a subject on which I shall have a further word in a moment.

As a Yale man I can recommend with the clearest conscience that you study the recent declaration of its distinguished president in which he called for a periodic review of presidential effectiveness. This review encompasses the possibility

of a peaceful change of office when the incumbent has served his usefulness or outstayed his welcome, neither of which, I feel sure, applies to the current president of Yale. In the absence of such procedures, however, we can point to instances of disruptive campus ferment, of grave injustice to the individual and his family, or even of expensive pay-off to effect a badly needed change. Without pursuing this lugubrious subject further, let me finish it by endorsing the suggestion of former chancellor Murphy of UCLA for some kind of fiscal guarantee to be made to the president at the time of the initial appointment against a time of premature separation. While no known college president has ever grown rich in office, many have stayed longer than they might have wished and done so largely out of economic necessity.

For the sake of our own economy of time this evening, let us assume the ideal circumstances in which the president has informed the chairman of the board in advance of the date on which he expects to be relieved of office. At this moment, to all intents and purposes, the recruitment process has begun. A growing practice seems to be for the incumbent to give one or two years' notice, and this would appear to be ideal. At the very least, this tends to protect him from being fired in the interval. It has, however, some serious drawbacks.

Just as a long courtship does not necessarily result in a happy marriage, so a long search does not guarantee a wise choice of president. A protracted period often gives a false sense of nonurgency. Further it encourages the upsurge of political factionalism. Students, faculty, alumni, even in some instances the general public, are quick to get into the act, each with a favorite-son candidate. Consequently, the new man, when finally chosen, may well be confronted with a warring constituency that can render him ineffectual, sometimes permanently. The long search can also discourage a lot of good candidates from interest in the position; and if they are really top flight, they will get other, possibly better offers in the interval. (They will invariably receive one or two better offers <u>after</u> they have committed themselves to you, but this fortunately is not your concern.) Thus I can repeat the advice given not long back by an educational statesman to a frantic search committee which had been engaged at its task for more than two years. "Stop looking for the knight in shining armor," he advised; "just go ahead and appoint a president."

The two most important initial aspects of recruitment are determining the qualifications to be possessed by the

successful candidate and the procedures to be followed in the process. Unfortunately these overlap so much that I am not sure they can be discussed in any orderly,separate manner. Determining the qualifications for the new president obviously entails procedural problems at the very outset. And top among these is the problem of faculty and student involvement.

The day when the trustees conduct the search and make the final determination in solitary splendor has passed--fortunately. Having so editorialized, however, let me immediately add that for the trustees to yield even the smallest fraction of their final decision-making authority would be an inexcusable abdication of responsibility. Yet the faculty, and to a lesser extent the students, have an extremely important input to make at this critical moment in the institution's history, particularly in helping to determine the future course of the institution and the kind of leadership essential to pursuing that course. But theirs is only one possible input. If time and funds are available, I would strongly recommend the retention of outside consultants to work with students, faculty, and trustees--in fact, with the total constituency--in a realistic appraisal of where the institution is at the moment and where it should be going in the days, months, and years ahead.

You will note that I call for at least a three-fold involvement in this exercise--trustees, faculty, and students.

One of the most persistent questions asked of any new president in his initial press interviews is what his plans are for the institution. Without questioning his potential role in plan modification, I would hold that the planning should have been concluded before the search for a new president even began. The public announcement of the vacancy can then include a clearly articulated statement of the requirements and expectations to be met. This announcement must, however, be handled with some sensitivity to public reaction.

When the regents of the University of California began their search for a successor to Clark Kerr, for example, they declared that "the president should possess. . . the capability for working imaginatively and constructively with the regents, administrators, faculty and students." This almost invited the smart retort; and as one political wag observed at the time, the only man capable of holding together such a coalition would be Ho Chi Minh! William Trombley, then educational editor of the Los Angeles Times, conjectured that "if Leonardo da Vinci would return to life the. . . Board of Regents might readily find the man they are seeking to be the next U.C. president." As for the predilections of pundits, let me

observe only that the resemblance between President Hitch, who has proved to be a very fine administrator, and the almost fabled Leonardo is a little remote.

This does suggest, though, that most search committees expect entirely too much. With a median salary of college presidents now in the neighborhood of $20,000, the committees, comprised as they are of human beings, devote their energies to seeking out the $150,000 man to fill the position. In fairness it must be said that the good college president, like the devoted professor, is far more concerned with the fiscal health of his institution than in his own domestic economy--which is one of the many reasons why he needs a tough-minded wife.

I will return in my conclusion to some other thoughts on the qualifications of the president, but in the meantime let me offer one or two animadversions. In the first place, far too often our search committees have what I would call the big-name syndrome. While I could not document this, I would guess that every prominent military or political figure in recent history has been offered an almost unlimited number of college presidencies. The sterling example of this, although I suspect it to be apocryphal, was the offer of the

presidency of Columbia University to Dwight Eisenhower, an offer which, as you will remember, he accepted. According to the grapevine, the trustees actually thought they were offering it to his brother Milton who, poor man, had to be content with the presidencies of Penn State and then Johns Hopkins before he wrapped up a distinguished academic career.

For the welfare of the institution the man is normally far more important than the name. I strongly subscribe, also, to the view of Harold Dodds, former president of Princeton, in calling for the selection of professional educators for positions of top academic leadership. The annals are full of the names of clergymen, generals, corporation presidents, even doctors and lawyers, and an occasional football coach, who have become college and university presidents. Some of them have even been remarkably successful. Perhaps Sam Johnson's remark about women preachers is applicable here. We should not be impressed when they turn out to be good. We should be surprised that they do it at all! On average, though, and particularly since an academic community is a peculiar breed of cat, I strongly opt for educational versus mere managerial expertise in the top leadership.

Another common syndrome, which I would appear to be supporting from my last remark, involves the presidential Ph.D. While I grant that the rigors of pursuing successfully a first-rate doctorate can provide an understanding of the psychological hangups of a president's faculty colleagues, it should not be considered to the exclusion of all other indications of academic and administrative acceptability. Because of what have become almost fixations of the campus, here is an area where the trustees may have to possess the courage to oppose their faculty and student consultants in this arduous process. I say this because I know of one recent instance when the board failed to go through with its first choice because of faculty pressure over the candidate's lack of the doctorate.

This merely demonstrates the importance of reaching agreement in advance, among all concerned, as to the direction the institution should be going and the type of leadership it should seek.

The next important step, after determining the qualifications of the man, is of course, corralling the candidates. And this leads me to comment on what I would call the nation-wide-search syndrome. Why every board feels it has to comb the highways and byways from Maine to California is one of the interesting mystiques of the presidential safari; but if you will look at

the public announcements following every successful conclusion you will find this claim consistently advanced. Some committees circulate every alumnus, both the quick and the dead. Some write to every college or college president over the breadth and depth of the land. Ads are now beginning to appear not just in the professional journals but even in some quasi-popular publications.

The obvious trouble with such a procedure is that the committee ends up with an unmanageable roster, and the winnowing process can be excessively demanding on all concerned. The trustees are easily tempted to turn the task over to others. There are better ways.

For example, the committee might call the chairman of the board of a comparable institution which has only recently gone through the process. Usually he is willing to share his list of finalists. Another approach is to write to the heads of such national institutionally-based associations as--this should come as no surprise--the Association of Governing Boards; or the American Council on Education, the Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Association of American Universities, and, if you will forgive the plug, the Association of American Colleges. We all have our backstairs lists, and usually we will try to suggest such persons as, in our judgment, fit the particular institutional needs. Then there are the heads of

the major foundations, most of whom know individuals of competence who have expressed an interest in making a move. There are even a few kingmakers in the business. Chancellor Tolley of Syracuse University, for example, was noted as a trainer of college presidents. To become a member of his administrative team was almost a guarantee of upward mobility.

And finally, though certainly I have not exhausted the list, are the executive placement agencies, some of whom do a superb job--at a fee, I might add. They will not necessarily come up with names which couldn't be discovered from other sources. But they do have one distinctive advantage, and this is often worth the price. While initially maintaining security on the name of the institution as well as of the candidate, they are able to do a two-directional sales job which eliminates many false leads and minimizes awkward negotiations. Also they are likely, since their business depends upon it, to do a careful screening job and thus prevent some tragic mistakes. The oversights of the amateurs from campus and board are at times beyond belief. If they would trouble to send someone to the candidate's old pasture to browse around, they could often save incalculable grief. Here is one area, by the way, where the retiring president can be of help, for he can usually get information from his administrative counterparts which neither

trustee nor faculty member can readily obtain. The top executive placement firms, however, can also get such information if you are willing to pay the price.

The person who is most often overlooked in the search for candidates is the man who is right under the committee's nose. Unfortunately, the academic world has been deficient in grooming for presidential succession. We must, of course, avoid allowing the retiring president to name his successor, for the natural tendency would be for him to select someone in his own image. On the other hand, the very low percentage of persons who move into the presidency from subordinate positions on the same campus suggests a woeful managerial deficiency.

I cannot help another observation here, and that has to do with the situation where an acting president must be appointed. Unless there happens to be a Mr. Chips at hand, a man with some ability who nevertheless has no aspirations or stamina for the permanent job, this is likely to present a very delicate problem. For we obviously want a good man as acting president, or he should not be appointed. On the other hand, since his is a lame-duck administration, he often jeopardizes his chances for the permanent succession and runs

the risk of being ground up in the political machinations that accompany a change of administration.

Assuming now that our list has been culled to the final four or five--and also assuming that the screening process has been more thorough than I fear it usually is--the next step should be the campus visit. Its importance in the selection process cannot be overemphasized. For example, in a recent survey conducted by the Committee on Educational Leadership in New York State and published under the title College and University Presidents (1967), "only a small number of the presidents believed the selection process had permitted them to show their strengths for the position in a significant manner; five said that their strengths were already known; four indicated that the selection process did not permit them to show their strengths at all." Moreover, the campus visit is an occasion as fraught with sensitivities as when the prospective bride first takes the prospective groom home to meet her parents. For example, if the candidate arrives at a moment when the SDS has just occupied the administration building he is likely to succumb to some second thoughts. On the other hand, if he is given a VIP tour during which he has no opportunity to look into any closets or under any carpets, he will, if he is wise, return home with a feeling of confirmed disinterest. What I mean

to imply is that the really good candidate usually needs to be sold on rather than to the institution. He will certainly want to talk to students, faculty, trustees, and members of the alumni and wider community on his first visit. The man who does not have these expectations may be a little too hungry.

And, incidentally, in addition to paying the candidate's expenses for at least one campus visit, it is sheer folly for the committee not to bring his wife out as well. In a survey a few years back only one out of 140 new male college presidents, other than members of the priesthood, was unwed. While there may be others, I know of only two distinguished lay/college presidents in my lifetime who were bachelors. The first lady plays so focal a role both at home and on campus that to exclude her from the screening process is to court probable disaster. Of course it is expensive to bring her along, but it can be far more expensive to leave her at home.

We come now to the culmination of this time-consuming, frustrating process--the moment of decision. I really have very little to say about this step, except that here is one area where any political division on the board can be catastrophic. I know of one situation where the board president declared flatly that unless his candidate were chosen he would consider it not only a vote of lack of confidence in his chairmanship but an

even more serious lack of appreciation for his many benefactions to the institution. A 14-13 vote elected his candidate; but I need scarcely tell you that the new president had a trying several years ahead of him.

And, finally, here is an area where the trustees must act as trustees, as the custodians of the institution's wellbeing. They cannot be swayed by the will of the faculty, the willfulness of the students, or, for that matter, by any outside political pressures. And yet I could devote the next hour to discussing situations where precisely the opposite has obtained. Further, the board should present a united front to the outside world. I attended a board meeting, however, when several of the trustees publicly announced, after the decision was reached in executive session, that they did not approve of the presidential choice and had voted against the candidate. In my judgment they should have either resigned or been removed from the board.

The public has a natural interest in the selection of the new president. Nevertheless, I deplore the recent tendency toward premature disclosure by either the candidate or the board. This can put both parties in an extremely awkward position and create the kind of furor on campus which no new president needs to confront. I can recall a premature disclosure by the leading candidate which, I suspect not unfairly, resulted in the withdrawal of the offer.

I am now ready, and I certainly hope you are not over-ready, to turn to the second part of my assignment--the retention of the college president.

It would seem that the simplest solution to retaining the college president is to make him happy. Since this is patently impossible under even the most favorable circumstances, we should grant it at best a passing glance. One of my presidential colleagues used to tell his assistant, "When it stops being fun, you should quit." Since any such prescription rigidly pursued would result in mass resignations, as well as in some 45,000 trustees ultimately throwing up their hands in despair, I think a much sounder caveat would be to say, "When it ceases being exciting, take a powder." For if one positive statement can be made these days about the presidency it is that it is never dull. And it could be this, as much as anything else, that has attracted so many capable administrators into the job.

I am grateful to Francis Horn, who himself has survived two or three exciting presidencies, for reminding me, in a recent article in Liberal Education, of the following statement from one of the really successful, hardnosed university presidents of another generation, Henry Wriston of Brown:

"People who know of the enormous strains that go with the job have asked many times, 'Would you do it again?' Of course I would," he said, "I could do no other. The opportunities so far outweigh the heartbreaks that to evade the responsibility would be folly." (I wish I had said that!)

Dr. Horn's article, entitled "The Job of the President," is rich with memorable statements from presidents explaining why they stayed with it or, conversely, why they quit. Although I shall resist the temptation of quoting from it, many of the statements would deserve a high place in any list of "famous last words." What they add up to is the inescapable conclusion that the job is impossible and that--if I may immediately change my mind about quoting from Horn's quotations--"If a man knows what it is like to be a university president and still wants to be one, he is not qualified for the job." Or so said the eminent Robert Hutchins of Chicago fame.

I would be misinterpreting our reason for being here this evening, however, if I continued trying to wring tears from your eyes on the subject of the president's difficult lot. On the contrary I will devote the remaining time with you to some personal observations on what you as trustees can do to make his life more bearable. To say that you are focal in this objective is not to exaggerate. Next to his wife and

an occasional foundation director you are probably the most important persons he knows. To say that your tender solicitude is all that it takes to guarantee his voluntary continuance in office, however, is to speak nonsense.

In your dealings with him there are three things which you should never forget.

First, he like you is a member of the board, or should be. He is, in fact, a very special member. On some issues, as for example his own retention, he should have no vote. On others, for example the retention or addition of members of the board, he should have three votes to every one else's one. For a very important factor in his retention is the degree to which he has a board which he can control, manipulate, maneuver, brain wash, you name it. It is a disservice to him and to the institution, of course, if the board is merely a rubber stamp. I used to sit with such a board. Matters were rarely brought to a vote. The chairman would turn to the president and ask, "Is that the way you want it, Thrisby?" And when the president would nod, the chair would say, "O.K., what's the next item on the agenda?" Bad as this is, however, I suspect I would prefer it to the board which nit-picked the president's every proposal.

A second thing you should remember is that he is the president of the institution, a remark so obvious that I make it

with no less seriousness. A few boards recently have "got with it" to the place where they include both faculty and students among their voting membership. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the New York Times a few weeks ago could run an article devoted to the waning power of the university president? As an unreconstructed reactionary I have no reservations about students or faculty on boards so long as they come from some other university. Otherwise there are many effective ways in which student and faculty input can inform the trustees--for example, through the joint-committee technique--without further compromising the president's basic responsibilities as spokesman for the institution to the board and for the board to the campus. If and when he no longer functions effectively in either direction, he should be replaced.

Of paramount importance, therefore, is a clear definition of the president's relations to the board at the outset of his tenure. I heard of one college where administrative decisions were never final until approved by a controlling lay body. Since this group met at the most twice a year, I could only conclude that the president's position was or could be untenable. I know of another instance where the chief business officer of the university served also as treasurer of the board,

which in effect gave him fiscal authority over the man to whom technically he should report, the man responsible for the management of the institution. Although this relationship was clearly undesirable, it remained in effect for some years, not infrequently to the visible distress of the president.

Thus at the time of his appointment, his relationships with the board and his authority over the campus must be as clearly delineated as possible. And at the risk of insulting some members of this audience, let me urge that you then stick to this contract, for that is what it is, and live up to your commitments. Not long ago I interviewed a candidate for a vice presidency who at the time was a college president. In response to the obvious question he related a harrowing tale of unkept commitments on the part of the board which had hired him. In the opposite quarter, the least discontented president of whom I have known is a man whose board agreed at the outset that he could take time to publish at least one book a year; and while he never hatched the output of a John D. McDonald, his steady stream of scholarly publications added distinction to his office and his institution. I suspect there were times, however, when it must have been difficult to preserve this commitment.

The third thing to remember is that, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, the president is a human being. He is neither Superman, Walter Mitty, or Casper Milquetoast, even though he may combine elements of all three. But human he is and, generally speaking, he deserves much more humane treatment from his many constituencies than he receives.

Before I turn more fully to the implications of this last observation, particularly as it relates to the longevity of the college president, let me observe that his wife also is human. She may well be inconsiderate enough to prefer a living husband to a dying president. She is mildly aware that, on average, he works sixty-two hours a week (if, that is, he likes his job). She is acutely aware that this, and the rigors of the office, leave him little time or energy for wife and children. The problem can be compounded if her home becomes the campus hostelry, as well as the home-away-from-home for the chairman of the board, even though the contract may provide a generous allotment for household help. She herself is almost as much a public figure as her spouse, whose satisfaction with his way of life is in direct proportion to hers. But then, I did not come here this evening to make my wife's speech. She is quite capable of speaking for herself. (Incidentally, I once prepared an address entitled "Observations from the Husband of a College President's Wife." Unfortunately no one ever invited me to deliver it.)

In your recognition of the president's essential qualities as a human being, there are some don'ts and do's, and with these I will approach the end of my evening's remarks.

On the don't side, don't feel so indebted to his predecessor that you provide the retiree with a home on the campus and a seat on the big board. If he doesn't elect to absent himself voluntarily, then you should show your gratitude by providing a three-year round-the-world voyage, all expenses paid. For the new man simply must have the opportunity to root himself deep in the heart of campus and community with a minimum of guidance from his predecessor, however well intentioned.

Second, don't unconsciously (or consciously) encourage subversion. In the process of the search it is quite possible that members of the board will have developed first-name relationships with faculty and even students. This is fine; I enjoy seeing friendliness, particularly in academia. On the other hand, it not infrequently continues in such a way that the president is in constant danger of end-runs by those who would capitalize on his innocence of their relationships with the board. Their interests, of course, are the sole welfare of the college and the success of the new administration. Or so they say. But the average college campus resembles nothing quite so much as a jungle, and the president

can never be secure from ambush when the board begins, either formally or informally, to deal directly with other components of the campus.

I do not mean to suggest that visits to the campus by members of the board ought to be eschewed. On the contrary, at times they can be quite helpful, particularly in these days when it is the declared intent of the campus militants to undermine the establishment. At the very least the president must be informed of any and all such broad activity, and no student or faculty member should be allowed the idea that he has successfully circuited presidential authority.

I could obviously list many other don'ts, but let me come back to one which I implied earlier in this address. And that is, don't expect too much of the president. A few of the larger universities, recognizing the realities of the job, have created in effect two presidencies, one for external relations, fundraising, etc., the other for internal management. Although I have never had any direct experience with this arrangement, it seems to make a lot of sense. Its success would certainly require careful delineation of authority and the clear understanding of which of the two executives calls the final shots. The mounting number of resignations and early retirements among the nation's outstanding academic leaders suggests at the very least that the job is getting to be too much for any one man.

And so, pursuing the theme of retention, here are some of the "do's" by which the board can contribute to the president's effectiveness, relative peace of mind, and reasonable longevity.

By all means, fair or foul, provide him with an adequate salary and comparable perquisites. In his very urbane book entitled The Mirror of Brass, Mark H. Ingraham, writing about the compensation and working conditions of college and university administrators, disclosed that the median salary of the president, as of 1966, was $20,000. Although this figure has doubtless risen in the interval, I question that the rise was at all commensurate with the increase in salaries of faculty, and certainly nowhere near that of electricians and plumbers. Since he is usually the only person on campus with no kind of tenure, he deserves some compensatory recognition. While I grant that he is probably too busy to spend much on himself, I suggest that he needs the psychological uplift of believing that the trustees appreciate his efforts, in a generously tangible manner.

My original design for this section of my remarks was to suggest that you give the president enough salary, enough staff, enough support, and enough rope--the last to be used only in extremis. Before briefly exploring any of these, however, let me urge that you protect the president against

himself by demanding that he take time off. Everyone is making unnegotiable demands of him; you should too. Thanks to a far-seeing program instituted a few years back by the Danforth Foundation, a handful of collegiate administrators has had the benefit of two to four months away from the job. As a grateful recipient of one of these "Short-Term Administrative Leaves" I can attest to the spiritual uplift which they provide a man who in many instances has not enjoyed more than a few weeks of relief in any one year. As an outgrowth of this Danforth program, the Association of American Colleges now has a special committee of presidents at work drafting a national policy statement on administrative leaves. In the interim let me urge that you not only require your president to absent himself from the campus periodically for a long weekend in the mountains, alone or with his favorite wife, but also that you force him every several years (if he survives that long) to take a protracted leave of absence to recharge his batteries.

Any such absence would appear to him totally impossible, of course, if the board fails to provide him with an adequate supporting staff. A few institutions may well be over-administered. A majority, I suspect, suffer from the opposite ailment. Generally, of course, the board relies on the president

to request what he needs in the way of vice presidents, provosts, deans, assistants, etc. But in his concern with balancing the budget, with paying the highest possible salaries to the faculty and providing a maximum number of scholarships to his students, he is very often inclined to shortchange his own office. You should, therefore, periodically invite him to review with a committee of the board his staff needs. And if he shyly asks for one part-time assistant, give him at least two full-time vice presidents.

Although I have written an unpublished book on the subject of the college president, I have no intention of throwing it at you tonight. Let me, nevertheless, toss in one other important "do" if you are really interested in retaining your president. Do give him every possible support. I recall, during an interview with a selection committee many years ago, asking what the board's reaction would be if I ran up a deficit at the end of my first year. They replied, "If you don't, we would think you weren't doing a very good job." My next question was what they considered the board's primary responsibility, next to selecting the president. They replied, "to raise money for the college." To this day, I have regretted the wisdom of that particular board in selecting another candidate.

While recognizing that the president, along with everything else, is the chief public relations officer of the institution, as well as the chief fundraiser, as well as the chief politician, a clear recognition of the board's participatory role in all three of these activities is essential to his success and wellbeing. No one should accept a board position who is not willing to be active in one or the other of these functions.

Implicit in this rather obvious caveat is my own conviction that the best way in which to insure the retention of the president is for a board to understand clearly its own specific role in the management of the institution. This applies to the board as a whole and to each member individually. By now there are available a substantial number of very effective statements on the role of the trustee. Every trustee should be willing to read one or more of these statements. These annual meetings of the AGB, moreover, provide valuable workshop experience. Throughout the country one can find many experts available to discuss the role of the trustees, and I would urge boards to avail themselves of such expertise.

The cardinal error, of course, is for the board to try to administer the university, for this is the responsibility of the president, and no man worth his salt will long tolerate

interference. The board should determine policy and then keep hands off as he seeks to carry out the policy. It should get into the act only when he asks for help or when there is a clear and present danger that he can't handle the show.

And so I come back to the proposition that, because of the enormity of the president's job, the best way the board can contribute to his retention is by giving him its full understanding and support.

His is a complex job, and it probably follows that he is a rather complex fellow. Although he himself may not be an outstanding scholar, it is essential that he possess a deep respect for the fundamental objectives of learning. If he happens to have a predilection for a particular academic discipline, so much the better, though he will soon discover that the pursuit of administration as such can and perhaps must for him be a scholarly preoccupation.

He is under no obligation to know in detail the specialized administrative functions which are intrinsic to the operation of a college community. He and his fellow officers exist, essentially, to maintain a campus climate where learning can take place efficiently and effectively. At the very least, therefore, he will need to be familiar with the context of every administrative function. I suggest further that, although it

is not up to him to supply the answers, it must be his continuous function to ask the questions; for, as Robert Hutchins once expressed it, a major focus of his job is "afflicting the comfortable."

As a kind of pater familias of the college community, he cannot avoid involvement in sensitive personnel and personal problems, though for the most part he has the right to expect that these will largely be handled at other levels. As a public figure, he is the symbol of the institution and thus he must be sensitive to the interests of his many constituents.

As a politician, he must not only deal with campus forces and factions but also study how to live with local, state, and even federal agents and agencies. He must of necessity be, from time to time, "a divining rod for locating deposits of rich metal"; for funds from other sources are never enough to do the whole job. And to cap this formidable array of musts, though very few presidents reach such a height, he must, to paraphrase the words of former president Herman B Wells of Indiana University, "be born with the physical strength of a Greek athlete, the cunning of a Machiavelli, the wisdom of a Solomon, the courage of a lion, if possible; but in any case be born with a stomach of a goat."

And so for you trustees, if you are fortunate enough to have such a man, hang on to him at all cost. On the other hand, if you are about to look for such a man, don't be too upset if you can't find him. The breed is a rare one. And anyway, a second-best man might try harder.